IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims as follows.

1. (original) An austenitic stainless steel characterized by consisting of, by mass %, C : more than 0.05 % to 0.15 %, Si : 2 % or less, Mn : 0.1 to 3 %, P : 0.04 % or less, S : 0.01 % or less, Cr : more than 20 % to less than 28 %, Ni : more than 15 % to 55 %, Cu : more than 2 % to 6 %, Nb : 0.1 to 0.8 %, V : 0.02 to 1.5 %, sol. Al : 0.001 to 0.1 %, N : more than 0.05 % to 0.3 % and O (Oxygen) : 0.006 % or less, and the balance Fe and impurities, further characterized by satisfying the following formulas (1) and (2):

$P \leq 1/(11 \times Cu)$ ...(1)

$sol.Al \leq 0.4 \times N$ ...(2)

wherein each element symbol in the formulas (1) and (2) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

2. (original) An austenitic stainless steel characterized by consisting of, by mass %, C : more than 0.05 % to 0.15 %, Si : 2 % or less, Mn : 0.1 to 3 %, P : 0.04 % or less, S : 0.01 % or less, Cr : more than 20 % to less than 28 %, Ni : more than 15 % to 55 %, Cu : more than 2 % to 6 %, Nb : 0.1 to 0.8 %, V : 0.02 to 1.5 %, sol. Al : 0.001 to 0.1 %, N : more than 0.05 % to 0.3 % and O (Oxygen) : 0.006 % or less, and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Co : 0.05 to 5 %, Mo : 0.05 to 5 %, W : 0.05 to 10 %, Ti : 0.002 to 0.2 %, B : 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Zr : 0.0005 to 0.2 %, Hf : 0.0005 to 1 %, Ta : 0.01 to 8 %, Re : 0.01 to 8 %, Ir : 0.01 to 5 %, Pd : 0.01 to 5 %, Pt : 0.01 to 5 % and Ag : 0.01 to 5 %, and the balance Fe and impurities, further characterized by satisfying the following formulas (1) to (3).

$P \leq 1/(11 \times Cu)$ ...(1)

$sol.Al \leq 0.4 \times N$ ...(2)

$Mo + (W/2) \leq 5$ ...(3)

wherein each element symbol in the formulas (1) to (3) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

3. (original) An austenitic stainless steel characterized by consisting of, by mass %, C : more than 0.05 % to 0.15 %, Si : 2 % or less, Mn : 0.1 to 3 %, P : 0.04 % or less, S : 0.01 % or less, Cr : more than 20 % to less than 28 %, Ni : more than 15 % to 55 %, Cu : more than 2 % to 6 %, Nb : 0.1 to 0.8 %, V : 0.02 to 1.5 %, sol. Al : 0.001 to 0.1 %, N : more than 0.05 % to 0.3 % and O (Oxygen) : 0.006 % or less, and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Mg : 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Ca : 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Y : 0.0005 to 0.5 %, La : 0.0005 to 0.5 %, Ce

: 0.0005 to 0.5 %, Nd : 0.0005 to 0.5 % and Sc : 0.0005 to 0.5 %, and the balance Fe and impurities, further characterized by satisfying the following formulas (1) and (2).

$P \leq 1/(11 \times Cu)$ ...(1)

$sol.Al \leq 0.4 \times N$ ...(2)

wherein each element symbol in the formulas (1) and (2) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

4. (original) An austenitic stainless steel characterized by consisting of, by mass %, C : more than 0.05 % to 0.15 %, Si : 2 % or less, Mn : 0.1 to 3 %, P : 0.04 % or less, S : 0.01 % or less, Cr : more than 20 % to less than 28 %, Ni : more than 15 % to 55 %, Cu : more than 2 % to 6 %, Nb : 0.1 to 0.8 %, V : 0.02 to 1.5 %, sol. Al : 0.001 to 0.1 %, N : more than 0.05 % to 0.3 % and O (Oxygen) : 0.006 % or less, and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Co : 0.05 to 5 %, Mo : 0.05 to 5 %, W : 0.05 to 10 %, Ti : 0.002 to 0.2 %, B : 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Zr : 0.0005 to 0.2 %, Hf : 0.0005 to 1 %, Ta : 0.01 to 8 %, Re : 0.01 to 8 %, Ir : 0.01 to 5 %, Pd : 0.01 to 5 %, Pt : 0.01 to 5 % and Ag : 0.01 to 5 %, and further at least one element selected from the group consisting of Mg : 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Ca : 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Y : 0.0005 to 0.5 %, La : 0.0005 to 0.5 %, Ce : 0.0005 to 0.5 %, Nd : 0.0005 to 0.5 % and Sc : 0.0005 to 0.5 %, and the balance Fe and impurities, further characterized by satisfying the following formulas (1) to (3).

$P \leq 1/(11 \times Cu)$ ...(1)

$sol.Al \leq 0.4 \times N$ ...(2)

$Mo + (W/2) \leq 5$ ...(3)

wherein each element symbol in the formulas (1) to (3) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

5. (currently amended) An austenitic stainless steel according to ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, further characterized by satisfying the following formula (4).

$O \leq 1/(60 \times Cu)$ ...(4)

wherein each element symbol in the formula (4) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

6. (new) An austenitic stainless steel according to claim 2, further characterized by satisfying the following formula (4).

$O \leq 1/(60 \times Cu)$ ...(4)

wherein each element symbol in the formula (4) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

7. (new) An austenitic stainless steel according to claim 3, further characterized by satisfying the following formula (4).

$O \leq 1/(60 \times Cu)$ ...(4)

wherein each element symbol in the formula (4) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

8. (new) An austenitic stainless steel according to claim 4, further characterized by satisfying the following formula (4).

$O \leq 1/(60 \times Cu)$ ...(4)

wherein each element symbol in the formula (4) represents the content (mass %) of each element.